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Memorial Service

In honor of our dearly beloved
and much lamented
President

William McKinley

held on

September Nineteenth, 1901

at

Temple Beth-El

Fifth Avenue and 76th Street
New York City

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Order of Service.

I **Prelude.**

II **Anthem.** "Cast thy burden upon the Lord."

III **Invocation.** **Rev. Dr. K. Kohler**

O Lord Ruler of the Universe, King of the Nations, Father of Men, Refuge of every woe-stricken Soul. Thou art our light in every darkness, and upon Thee we cast our burdens in time of trouble and distress. And so we come before Thee, O God, to-day, all Thy people in all sections of this land, each son and daughter of this great nation, bowed down with a heavy grief. We have left our daily vocations to enter Thy sanctuaries and seek Thy aid and Thy comfort in our great common sorrow. Thou hast made us drink the cup of bitterness. Out of jubilant joy Thou hast plunged us into universal gloom. We have been robbed of the object of our glory, and pride. The crown has fallen from our head, a prince among men, the twice-elect of his people who led them to glory and power and who seemed destined to achieve greater triumphs while advancing on the road of peace and honor, of concord and friendship with the nations. Thou hast suffered him to fall by the hand of the wicked, and in Thine inscrutable wisdom Thou didst not heed the prayer and supplications of all these millions for their stricken chief, and we not only grieve over the loss of one beloved by all, because he was a lover of men, but because Thou, O God, didst pour the grace of a kindly soul upon him, upon all he did and said. We are filled with shame at the thought that in our own free

land such an atrocious deed should have been committed, that we should harbor in our midst a spirit that defies justice and plots evil and subverts the majesty of the law which Thou hast planted in the heart of man.

But Thou O God, art a God of compassion and love, and in contrition and humiliation we approach Thy throne of mercy, to-day when the body of our martyr president is laid to rest, asking Thee for light in our gloom and for comfort in our national affliction.

Teach us O God, to bless Thee for the seeming evil which Thou sendest us, as well as for the good, and make us realize the blessings that come even from hours of trial. Fill us with the spirit of gratitude for the beautiful life that was given us and for those principles of liberty and manhood that have given our nation the strength and the wisdom to stand the hardest tests, and come out triumphantly and with regenerated vigor out of every trial and misfortune.

Be with us, O God, in our devotion, and hear our prayers and let all parts and members of our great commonwealth as they are united to-day in tears and in sorrow, be all the closer united together in love and loyalty and for the tasks imposed upon us by Thy Providence. Imbue us with faith and hope and lift us into the full consciousness that we are Thy children, that, while all life is fleeting we abide in Thee, and while all earthly greatness vanishes, Thy word, Thy spirit lasteth forever. That though man be humbled, Thy name shall be exalted and glorified forever. AMEN.

IV **Anthem.** "O Lord what is Man."

V **Responsive Reading.**

PSALM 103
PSALM 112

VI **Hebrew Song.** **Dr. Silverman and Choir**

VII Memorial Sermon. Rabbi Samuel Schulman

TEXT: LAMENTATIONS V, 16, 19.

The crown of our head hath fallen; woe unto us for we have sinned. Thou, O Lord, remainest forever, Thy throne from generation to generation.

These words voice for us the full message which this sorrow-laden hour is to speak to us. They are the cry of a heart rent with grief, but also the assertion of an immovable trust in the future. They are wrung from the Prophet of old as he sat weeping over the ruins of Zion. His manly soul was convulsed with sobs as he beheld the pride of his people fallen and trampled in the dust. His sublime faith was strong enough to master his grief and see in the everlastingness of God whose throne is established on righteousness and judgment, the eventual salvation and renewal of the glories of this nation.

Thus the Republic, speaking out of the depths of one national heart with unanimity of mind and speech first gives vent to the great woe which has bowed the nation, but in the very midst of its sorrow and humiliation it becomes conscious of its strength. Our coming together to-day in response to the President's proclamation, show us the relation in which government stands to religion. Government does not command it nor prescribe it; it neither fosters nor promotes it. But it relies for its own strength, stability and sanctity upon men's sacred convictions as to the bindingness of law, their sense of responsibility to their maker and faith in a righteous Ruler of nations. In the trying hour of national necessity or calamity, when the hearts of men are stirred to their inmost being and we are made to feel how weak and ineffective is human planning and building if God does not will the fruition or achievement, the magistrate naturally falls back upon the unfailing resource of religion. He invited men to worship, to

turn their hearts in prayer and humiliation, in repentance and holy resolve. That we need no urging is proved by the earnest and zealous patriotism which recently made one of our holiest days in the year almost lose its individual character in the all-overshadowing thought of the nation's loss. It is a sacred privilege to share such a grief, because by so doing, we feel our oneness with our fellow-men and we understand that country means not only a land to live in and opportunity to make a living, but that it is a synonym for our mental and moral possessions and above all that OUR COUNTRY means the loftiest ideals of humanity in which we share.

A national grief brings out more clearly than anything else the thought of men's mutual dependence, their mutual responsibilities for every deed that is permitted to be done. And when the cause of our grief is the death, by an assassins' hand, of the man who not only was twice honored by the nation's choice, called to shape its policies and guide its destinies, but was also in his career, in his character, and in his conscious farewell to the world and its prizes, a striking embodiment of American genius, then every heart that is not dulled by selfish interest and every mind that is not warped by bigoted prejudice and every soul that is not too torpid to be affected by an event that shows us the sad uncertainty of life and the mystery of its divine disposal, must cry out with anguish and tears, "O, the crown of our head hath fallen."

We are first overwhelmed by our terrible loss. We stand bereaved of a man who, in the most exalted station, made conspicuous the strength, the pride and the blessing of American institutions. The successful and beloved President was an embodiment of the nation's greatness. He was the unexcelled type of its splendid manhood. He was the exemplar of that quiet, broad-minded yet heart-felt religiosity which is the creative inspiration and restraining force in American freeedom and democracy. His career was the illustration of

American opportunity. His achievements, while they assure him an immortal place in history will, on analysis, be found to be the result of American character; its passion for liberty and its faith in its own irresistible power and destiny. His accomplishments as a statesman are perhaps the clearest example in our career, of a readiness to interpret the will of the people and become its instrument. No President like McKinley, who stood at a crisis in the nation's life and with his executive pen wrote a new page in its record, was so dependent upon the judgment and enthusiasms of the masses. Few leaders have therefore been blessed in a so great a measure with the confidence and affections of their countrymen and have been permitttd to win such world-historic success by studying patiently, firmly and unselfishly the desires and aspirations of those who were the source of their power. The President's administration at first appeared to some as slow, hesitating and vacillating. In truth it was a continuous unremitting study of the people's thoughts and an energetic realization of them in policy. McKinley's greatness was therefore in a distinct sense the people's greatness, an expression of the capacity for self-government and its undaunted faith in the mission of freedom to every corner of the globe where the fate of war might bring our flag and duty demand its stay. Who more than the President resisted the multitude that clamored for war three years ago? Firm as an immovable rock he stood amid the billows of enthusiastic frenzy, partisan indignation and personal vilification. OH, HE LOVED PEACE BECAUSE DEEP IN HIS HEART HE ALWAYS LOVED HIS FELLOW-MEN. He shrank from the horrors of war. His whole mature life having been devoted to the study of methods for his people's prosperity and their industrial supremacy among the nations, the dominating motive of his character—that which explains his success in politics—his disarming of opponents, his winning of friends, and his ultimate com-

mand of the admiration of the world, was "concord and not conflict." And yet, as has often happened in the world's history, the tender-hearted man of peace became by necessity of circumstances the resolute man of war ; and he proclaimed that war for humanity whose purpose was the freedom of one island and whose ultimate results were the bringing to the distant isles not a chain of oppression but a charter of redemption. William McKinley will have the unparalleled record of having presided over his people in a time of uninterrupted prosperity, of having by his lovable, conciliatory personality set the final seal upon the everlasting re-union of North and South, of having obtained for America an unprecedented authority in the world's councils, of having proved to the world the purity of our purposes inasmuch as he guaranteed the sincerity of our motives in the Philippines by the magnanimity of our conduct in China. And he accomplished all this by keeping his ear close to the heart of his fellow countrymen and while reading their desires, he obtained their love and gratitude. Few careers like his, rich as it is in personal success, national glory and potent with future consequences for the country were, at the same time, so faithfully and consistently a commentary on the possibilities of American Democracy. His record was written by the deliberate will of the nation and inspired by what is best in its character, and when we see that all this embodiment of our political wisdom, of the charity of our liberty, of our industrial prowess and our national greatness can be swept away by the mad act of an assassin, a great sorrow siezes us as we stand awed, crushed by a grief which we hope will chasten and we feel humiliates.

What is the crown of human achievement if in one moment its brilliancy is the admiration of the world and in another it is flung into the dust and ashes of death ? What is the boast of our free institutions, of government by law and through law, if a misguided wretch can, by striking down our

beloved President, strike at the heart of our freedom and mock with the insane glitter of his hateful and revengeful eye the jewels of our liberty and self-government? Alas, our crown hath fallen! By as much as our President was near our hearts, a son of the people and never for a moment forgetting the ties that bound him to the humblest of the land as his ambitions were not directed to self-aggrandizement but were devoted to services for us, by as much as his dreams of grandeur were visions of our prosperity and his well-weighed decisions of policy voiced the aims and hopes of millions, as his greatness was the epitome of the nation's genius, by so much must we see in his martyrdom our threatened calamity and in his death a blow at our cherished ideals.

We weep for the fallen crown not only of great achievement but of splendid American manhood; we mourn the loss of a noble character. He was found prepared for the most unexpected emergencies because he was early trained to the demands of duty. His unsullied integrity, his fine sense of honor, consecration to the promotion of his country's prosperity and therefore the people's happiness, all these when we remember the comparative pettiness of his pecuniary possessions despite the tremendous power that he wielded, give the lie to the base charge that in the nation's onward march he permitted himself to be the instrument of others' greed. He was indeed the captain of the proud and prosperous Ship of State, but humanly speaking the only prize he ever won for himself was the consciousness of duty well done in positions of honor, and justified expectation of an immortal memorial in the future. He illumined the politician's career with the light of a sincere, unostentatious and unstinted patriotism. His was a loving, conciliatory, loyal nature. He converted many enemies but never became untrue to one friend. Twice before his first nomination to the presidency might he by skillful manipulation or discreet inaction have obtained the

coveted honor, yet he, the "weak man" as he was sometimes called by the superficial observers, had the only strength worth having—the strength, not of obstinacy but of character. He possessed the armament of virtue with which to resist the frenzied siege of partisans when to have yielded and said yes would have meant treason to friends and a violation of a promise. And his loyality was presented in such a natural, simple and matter of fact way that the deed was convincingly illustrative of the man. When congratulated he calmly said: "Is it such an heroic deed of honor not to have acted with dishonor? HIS GREATNESS WAS THE GROWTH OF HIS GOODNESS. While he was the successful statesman, his success only made evident to all what in every stage of his life he proved to be—the lovable man. And as if to emphasize the source whence flow the virtues that make for such a splendid type of manhood, he took home-life and giving an ideal example of what it should be, of what chivalry, perfect devotion and unselfish love should exist between man and wife, he let the benign light of domestic happiness stream out to every home in the land as a continous mentor and quickening influence.

Alas, fallen is the crown of our head! We weep for the martyred President, we bewail the tragic death of the noble man, and we weep also for the beautiful soul that has taught the truth, which above all needs he learned in our age, that the mind's power, the will's strength, the heart's tenderness and the spirit's victory over hatred, suffering and death are all rooted in a faith that is able to say, "It is God's way—His will be done."

But not only do we weep. We are humiliated, we are bowed down by our sense of sin. "Woe unto us for we have sinned." We stand in the presence of God abashed, blushing for our sinning human nature which could make such a crime as the murder of the President a possibility. The human soul is capable of sharing the highest glories of the race. It

must therefore be charged with the humiliation of its baseness. Every noble thought, every generous deed, every heroic endeavor, every sublime triumph of mind or conscience as it finds a response, an echo or a sympathy in our hearts, ennobles and enriches us, because while sharing its spirit we make ourselves its heirs. On the other hand the meannesses, the degradations and the crimes of man debase our humanity. There is a deep sense of the word in which society shares the responsibility for the wickedness allowed to flourish. There can be no condoning of such a terrible deed as this done by anarachy. It is the fruit of the gall and the wormwood of a soul embittered by insane hatred and benighted by Godlessness. But we must ask ourselves, is our American life altogether innocent of deeds which kindle the rage of anarchy into a devastating flame? Ah, friends, the answer to this is the most awful significance of our beloved President's death and might, if taken to heart, prove a chastening and educating influence. We ask, why does God permit such a terrible calamity to a nation? Such a question is difficult to answer. "It is His way" and His ways are not our ways. One of the profoundest truths taught by one of the greatest of Israel's seers is that the innocent are often made to bear the iniquities of their generation and out of the wounds of the martyr there flows healing for those who have gone astray. It is not enough for us to be overwhelmed with grief; as intelligent and moral beings we must, in the spirit of old Hebrew prophecy and American Puritanism, seek some significance, some educating message in every awful world-historic calamity. We have been altogether too absorbed in the art of making money to ponder well the tremendous responsibilities which its possession entails. Numerous as are the noble benefactors in our midst, yet it must be confessed that an estrangement is growing more and more between those who possess wealth and wield power, and those who have nothing

and in the industrial machine are designated as "the mere hands." While earnest men, serious students and lovers of their fellow-men are devoting themselves by thought and service to the bridging over of this chasm, demagogues have been playing upon the passions of men and have been preaching without restraint a gospel of hatred. Alas, have we not so abused the precious and inviolable possession of a free commonwealth—freedom of speech—that we have permitted the license of hatred and incendiarism? Have not our political critics often spoken as if even the highest in the land were not above corruption, and has not even our dead President been spoken of in words which would make it appear that he, the simple man of the people, the very incarnation of Democracy, was scheming to place a crown upon his head? Many a man and many a newspaper who in all sincerity now join in the nation's grief, have not been without sin. Oh, we cannot make any restoration to him, if through sins of omission and commission we have contributed to his martyrdom. Nor should we let the hysteria of grief make us reel in our judgment or in a moment of wrath say we are ready to undo the work of ages and abolish altogether freedom of speech. But let us in humility and penitence learn the lesson which Providence, it seems to me, teaches through this dreadful event. Let us not forget the awful consequences which may result from indiscriminate speech in a land of eighty millions, where what is said in a corner may be flashed across the globe. Let us remember that a word may prove a weapon and a cartoon not a criticism but a crime, if these be the sparks that kindle the mass of hate in a diseased soul. Let this insight be our humiliating confession which we repentantly and prayfully make.

But this is not the time to speak only in accents of despair. Let us emulate our dead President and be calm and composed. Out of grief and humiliation speaks the Republic's

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triumph; its divine principles are everlasting—"Thou, O Lord, remainest—thy Throne from generation to generation." Leaders may pass away, but the Republic lives. This is not a government of persons, it is one of law. The hearts of the people may break in anguish, but their government remains unbroken. The assassin's crime may remove one President, another equally the choice of the people (without the slightest tremor of embarrassment to the State) instantly and peaceably takes his place. Liberty may be abused, but it still remains man's highest ideal and therefore his holiest possession—and it will ENDURE. Conscious of its strains, it will seek by reason and law to cleanse itself, but it will continue to shine and bless men with undimmed splendor. Anarchy may denounce law and wreak its vengeance on authority, but the calm and sublime answer to it, in the spirit of a McKinley, which a common-wealth of liberty-loving and law-abiding citizens makes—is the gift of THIS VERY LAW and justice even to the assassin and the provision of able talent for his formal defence. Righteousness and justice may be twisted by greed, trampled by hate, spurned by envy, forgotten altogether by madness, but inhering in the very organism of a government of the people, for the people and by the people, their realization will continually grow until human society mirrors the kingdom of God whose throne is based on right and judgment. The men whom the people elect pass away but their very worthiness and patriotic sincerity teach us by word and precept that greater than perishable man is the imperishable ideal of the Republic— a people acting in freedom and restrained by law.

O, thou beloved, departed spirit of our great and good President, we mourn thy loss in humility and contrition. We bring thee the tribute of our heart's grief, of our sincere tears; but thou art not to be bewailed. Thy fame is undying. Thy crown, fallen here, has been translated to celestrial bliss and Thy name will abide unforgetable on thy country's scroll.

thou wilt take thy place with her great sons; for thou hast done well by thy country. Thou wilt be remembered as one of an immortal three. Future generations will proclaim thy full praise when they say: Washington established American liberty with independence; Lincoln preserved it through union; and McKnley extended it to distant islands and oppressed races. Thy life was complete; the Master called thee. Thy reward is certain. As for us, we will treasure thy heritage, and even while we weep for these we will reconsecrate ourselves with new hopes, holy resolves and immovable faith to the duties of citizenship and to the welfare of the Republic.

VIII **Anthem.** "Why art thou cast down my soul."

IX **Memorial Prayer.** **Rev. Dr. K. Kobler**

Almighty Ruler over Life and Death! Stricken with sorrow we humbly bow to Thy mysterious decrees, Overawed by Thy judgments we recognize that Thou art a righteous God and Thy path is the path of holiness. We thank Thee for the assurance of Thy love which sustains us in the hour of affliction, and for the certainty of immortality which Thou hast planted in our soul. Oh how powerful does his conviction become when a great and good life has ended, and is lifted above the valley of tears into the transfiguring realm of heavenly glory to bless generations to come! Should we bewail the premature death of our beloved chief, Thy righteous servant, as if we were without faith in Thee, and complain that human hope has been deluded and human skill and foresight have utterly failed? Thou alone knowest which is for our good and Thou allowest to each, high or low, his task and his end according to Thy sublime designs. We thank Thee, O God, for all the manifestations of Thy love to which William McKinley's life gave glorious testimony before the

world. We thank Thee that he was permitted to achieve great things for our nation, and that he did Thy biddings humbly and faithfully, devoutly and reverently, and yet manfully and bravely. We thank Thee that under his leadership our nation progressed and prospered, opening new highroads of commerce, new chambers of blessings for all lands and nations on earth, and while promoting the cause of justice and liberty and rendering the American name honored and respected everywhere, he himself exhibited a noble type of American manhood, a fine pattern of humanity, a spotless character, an exemplar of civic and domestic virtue. And as we thank Thee for the simple and pure life he led as citizen, as soldier and statesman, as husband and son—a shining example to many—so we bless Thee also for the heroic traits he displayed at the end of his illustrious career, for the lesson of fortitude and patience he gave amidst suffering and ailment, for the love of justice and the reverence for the majesty of the law which he manifested in the hour of greatest pain and anguish, and for the beautiful words and songs of faith upon his lips in his dying hour with which he seemed to rob death of its horror and the grave of its sting. For all these precious legacies he bestowed upon our nation we praise Thee, O God, and we pray that the lessons of his life and of his death may ever be fruitful of spiritual blessings to us and our children and children's children.

Grant him whom Thou hast taken to Thyself O God, the bliss and peace which Thou has vouchsafed for the good and the righteous of all nations in the world of the spirit. Be with her who was the faithful companion of his life, and sharer of his trials and triumphs and be her strength and comfort in her overwhelming grief. Bless him upon whom the great burden of care and responsibility for the nation has so suddenly fallen. Thou hast endowed him with a keen sense of duty, with a glowing patriotic spirit and with fearless courage

in the battle for right and liberty. So guide and protect him and his administration O God, that he may carry out his lofty aims and intentions for the welfare and honor of our land and the peace of the world. Bless our nation and banish strife and malice forever. Let the spirit of iniquity and lawlessness be crushed and justice and liberty triumph, and strengthen each one of us in the conviction that while men and generations come and go, the principles of truth and justice and humanity abide and by them we rise from strength to strength to see Thy face, O God, on Zion's hill.

Heal God every wound inflicted, dry every tear and banish grief and woe from our midst, and so we all unite in the recitation of the Kaddish prayer, hallowing the name of God on earth as His name is hallowed in heaven.

X **Kaddish.** Joined in by the Congregation.

XI **National Hymn.**

XII **Benediction.** **Rabbi Samuel Schulman**

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